

NEALE WHITAKER

THE STYLE GURU

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If only there were hotels that looked as good as this

Why I have designs on this hot Aussie's glam interiors



I CAN see Greg Natale with the Rat Pack in Palm Springs, poolside in one of those Slim Aarons photos where the umbrellas are always yellow. Or beneath a mirror ball at Studio 54, on a velvet banquette with Liza Minnelli.

My guess is that either scenario would delight the Australian interior designer, who admits his brand new furniture range, Hudson, is inspired by "the flourish, glamour and refinement that New York enjoyed post-Second World War".

Most of my questions for Natale are concerned with style and decor, but the one that bubbles to the top is, when does this man sleep? In the past two years he's published a book and promoted it across Australia and the US, designed three furniture collections, several collections of rugs and carpets, tiles, cushions and wallpaper, in addition to renovating the slick, three-storey HQ in Sydney's Surry Hills that's home to a team of 15 creatives.

And let's not forget a staggering portfolio of residential and commercial projects across Australia (including a hotel in the Hunter Valley due to open soon) and as far afield as Oklahoma. It's a workload that would make a lesser mortal flinch.

"I don't sleep!" he laughs. "But, jokes aside, I'm one of those lucky people that can multitask easily. And it has to be said I have a great team who I couldn't do it without."

Visitors to Paddington's The Vignette Room (www.thevignetteroom.com.au) can see Hudson in situ. It's a clever retail concept that lets customers look, touch and play with the range. Hell, you



The Hudson range from Greg Natale (pictured right) is inspired by the glamour of New York in the post-World War II era.

can even jump on the bed. If only there were hotel rooms that looked as good as this.

"There will be," he laughs, in reference to the upcoming hotel. "We wanted to find retail partners who were fresh and invested in making their mark on their local homewares scene."

Natale neatly deflects my question about his signature style but perhaps I can answer on his behalf. It's sophisticated, detailed and considered, and can also be playful.

"I love tailoring," he says. "I approach an interior project

like a tailor does a fine suit."

It's no coincidence that his recent book, with an introduction by his friend and mentor American designer Jonathan Adler, was called *The Tailored Interior* (Hardie Grant). "Greg Natale definitely has it," writes Adler. "It is the ability to make perfection look effortless."

That's valuable affirmation for any designer. Natale's local following is undeniable, but he's also one of a group of Australian interior designers like David Hicks gaining international acclaim. He

believes our style is now more clearly defined.

"We're becoming more layered and more decorative and have our own twist on things. It's a nice pastiche of styles that suits our unique climate and light."

It's a look that has certainly struck a chord on the US west coast, where Natale and has a growing fan base.

So how does he see things in 2016, style-wise?

"Patterned floors will continue to thrive.

Square tiles will give subway tiles a run for their money and brass is still hot!"

Natale mentions LA-based graffiti artist Retna.

"I've loved his work for a while. I've got one of his amazing graphic rugs in my new office."

There's that twist he mentioned. This man can make graffiti glamorous, too.

NEALE WHITAKER IS EDITOR-IN-CHIEF OF VOGUE LIVING AND A JUDGE ON THE BLOCK



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